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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0837  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1468  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 4623

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 000707

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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/ISRAEL: "DISMAYED"

REF: A. SECSTATE 118799  
[1](#)B. THE HAGUE 668  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 000707

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[1](#)C. THE HAGUE 615

Classified By: Polecon Counselor Andrew C. Mann for reasons 1.4(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: The Dutch will support EU consensus on the anti-Israel resolutions at UNGA, having negotiated a strong Explanation of Vote (EOV) by the EU. FM Verhagen was dismayed by the latest Israel decision on settlements in Gilo, and angered by the surprise announcement of new settlements in Gilo shortly after a visit and phone call with Israeli FM Lieberman. FM Lieberman's visit on November 11 was a demonstration of how to irritate people and lose friends. In contrast with an earlier meeting of the two ministers, however, Lieberman seemed fully in charge. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) ANTI-ISRAEL RESOLUTIONS AT UNGA: Post delivered reftel A points to key MFA contacts on UN, human rights and Middle East affairs. In a November 19 discussion with Dorine Wytema and David Zeverijn, senior policy officers in the Middle East department, Zeverijn indicated the Netherlands would support the EU consensus position on the anti-Israel resolutions. This year's resolutions are significantly worse than last year's. However, the Dutch were satisfied that their firm position within the EU yielded a strong EOV with language addressing the Goldstone report, the blockade language, the

rocket attacks and Israel's right to self defense. Within the EU, we found ourselves needing to pick our battles and therefore opted to support consensus, said Zeverijn. (COMMENT: The Dutch have been criticized for their tough position on Serbian accession to the EU, among other issues, and may be seeking to take a more conciliatory approach within the EU. END COMMENT.) Zeverijn added that Dutch domestic politics, with some parties highly critical of Israel, also made it difficult for Verhagen to buck EU consensus (reftel C). Finally, Zeverijn suggested it was best to avoid a repeat of the EU split that occurred during the Geneva debate over the Goldstone report.

13. (C/NF) REACTION TO NEW SETTLEMENTS: Wytema advised confidentially that FM Verhagen was angry about the Israeli decision to approve settlements in Gilo. Some of his anger stemmed from the fact that FM Lieberman did not reveal the settlement plan during a December 11 visit to The Hague or in a thank you call afterward. In public comments, Verhagen said he was dismayed by the new settlements. (NOTE: Verhagen used the Dutch word onthutst, which one commentator translated as flabbergasted, and onthutst probably sounds slightly stronger than dismayed to Dutch ears. However, Zeverijn indicated the FM's remarks matched the U.S. language indicating dismay. END NOTE.)

14. (C/NF) VISIT BY FM LIEBERMAN: Zeverijn described Lieberman's visit as a demonstration of how to irritate people and lose friends. Wytema noted that Lieberman started first and spoke for 20 minutes without giving Verhagen the opportunity for a back-and-forth dialogue. Lieberman also had dinner with far-right Freedom Party leader Gert Wilders during his visit. According to Wytema, Lieberman made no movement on peace settlement issues, was pessimistic and cynical about every Palestinian, including Abbas, and asserted the ball was in Palestine's court because the problem was not with us. Lieberman also expressed distrust of Turkey, suggesting the Turkey-Iran-Syria Qdistrust of Turkey, suggesting the Turkey-Iran-Syria rapprochement is part of a plan to divide Iraq after the Americans depart. Verhagen told Lieberman you need friends, and emphasized his friendship, but noted that the Netherlands cannot go on defending Israel without helpful actions by the Israelis. Verhagen urged movement on the settlements issue, noting that the Netherlands viewed them as illegal and a violation of obligations under the roadmap. A good gesture, even a temporary moratorium, would help. Verhagen also urged Lieberman to strengthen Abbas -- Israel's best partner. He asked Lieberman to lift border restrictions against the Palestinians to better address humanitarian concerns, while reaffirming Dutch support for anti-smuggling efforts. Finally, he urged further investigations of the Gaza conflict, noting that he would try to keep international resolutions in New York fair, but that Israel could help with more transparent efforts and more publicity with its investigations. Zeverijn concluded that the visit had one benefit -- it deflected criticism from the Dutch parliament away from Verhagen and toward Lieberman.

15. (C) LIEBERMAN IN CHARGE: Wytema noted that Leiberman seemed fully in charge in the meeting, and that D/FM Ayalon

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and other staff did not speak. (NOTE: This contrasts with a previous meeting in Jerusalem, where Lieberman appeared frustrated and deferred to his staff. END NOTE.)  
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